

## Redwater bridge opening a milestone in development of Athabasca Landing Trail



*Westlock County* ... The new Redwater Bridge, located near Half Moon Lake, has officially opened. The new bridge is an important conduit for recreational trail users travelling the historic, 150-kilometre Athabasca Landing Trail between Fort Saskatchewan and Athabasca.

Though primarily intended for non-motorized recreational trail users, the new access-controlled, single lane bridge will also accommodate light local motor vehicle traffic. It is a major milestone in the development of the proposed Athabasca Landing Trail, a non-motorized recreation trail that will become part of Alberta's extensive trail system. The master plan for the new trail was unveiled at the same event.

The first crossing of the bridge was by horse-drawn covered wagons to recreate the role the original 1905 bridge played in the historic Athabasca Landing Trail.

The project was led by the Athabasca Recreational Trails Association, and was made possible with grants from the Government of Canada, Government of Alberta, Westlock County, Trans Canada Trail and Alberta TrailNet Society.

“The Government of Canada was pleased to support the construction of the Redwater Bridge through its National Trails Coalition program,” said **Brian Storseth, MP Westlock-St. Paul**. “Not only did this project provide employment to many local Albertans, it will also enable residents and visitors to access recreational and tourism opportunities in the region.”

“We are pleased with the progress already made on the Athabasca Landing Trail, and the emphasis placed on exploring the many recreation and tourism opportunities in the region,” said **Cindy Ady, Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation**. “Completing the bridge and master plan are just the first steps of a journey that will help Albertans and visitors experience the history and culture of the region while enjoying the outdoors.”

Building a new Redwater Bridge on the historic trail route was identified as a priority in phase one of the Athabasca Landing Trail Master Plan. The Government of Alberta, five municipalities, trail operator groups and the Alberta TrailNet Society worked together on the development of this strategy, which outlines the proposed trail route, key construction requirements and historic features for development.



“The new Redwater Bridge design copies that of the original wooden bridge,” said **Rob Woito, Chair, Athabasca Landing Trail steering**

**committee.** “In tribute to the unique history of the Athabasca Landing Trail and its importance to early settlement in Alberta. We intend to convert the 1912 steel bridge that was replaced by the new bridge into a trailhead and interpretive display. This will be one of several landmarks that will add interest along the trail.”

The Athabasca Landing Trail was an important transportation route in the late 1800s. Communities situated near or along the trail include Athabasca, Bon Accord, Clyde, Colinton, Fedorah, Fort Saskatchewan, Gibbons, Lamoureux, Meanook, Nestow, Perryvale, Rochester, Tawatinaw, Waugh and Westlock.

**Source:** Government of Alberta news release, & the web editors